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ABSTRACT

The Center for Educational Studies is a cooperative research center jointly funded and governed by the Grand Rapids Public Schools and Western Michigan University. It developed out of the need for more sustained longitudinal research oriented toward practical teaching applications. Current research being carried out includes studies on sex education, individualization of instruction, and performance contracting in special education. (Organization charts and a budget analysis are included.) (JB)



SUMMARY STATEMENT

The Grand Rapids Public Schools - Western Michigan University Center for Educational Studies is a unique agency for achieving cooperation between practicing teachers and administrators and university personnel who seek to advance the study of education. The Center for Educational Studies exists in order to join the resources of two different yet complimentary systems - The Grand Rapids Public Schools and Western Michigan University - in hopes of producing knowledge about education which is useful to both systems. Both institutions recognize that in order to improve the education and practice of teachers, research and evaluation are necessary.

The Center is a permanent part of both institutions who share equally in the cost, use and governance of it. The significance of the Center for Educational Studies lies in its departure from the "one-shot", limited and transitory nature of the usual university - school system cooperation which hinders the conduct of longitudinal studies, and thwarts the cumulative development of knowledge. Currently, several collaborative teams of investigators from both institutions are conducting research on such topics as sex education, individualization of instruction, and performance contracting in special education.

Teacher training is an important part of the mission of Western Michigan University. In order to achieve increasing success in fulfilling this mission, it is necessary to increase our knowledge about the teaching-learning process. The Center for Educational Studies is a manifestation of the belief that an increase in understanding can best be furthered through a new relationship between the university and the public school.



ABSTRACT

The Grand Rapids Public Schools - Western Michigan University Center for Educational Studies developed as a result of the collaboration of several university faculty members and school system personnel on evaluation research conducted in 1965. These individuals came to realize that regularized cooperation on research between the university and the school system could have major benefits for both institutions. Discussions were initiated concerning the feasibility of developing an organization to link the resources of two systems. Appropriate administrators from the university and the school system appointed a planning group to develop a proposal for a jointly sponsored research organization. This planning group produced a proposal which was adopted by the Boards of both institutions. In September 1968, the Grand Rapids Public Schools - Western Michigan University Center for Educational Studies began operations.

Both institutions share equally in the governance, cost and use of the Center. The Center for Educational Studies is governed by a Policy Council which is responsible to the President of the University and the Superintendent of Schools. The administration of the Center is comprised of two staff members from each institution who have a half-time appointment to the Center. Each sponsoring institution provides one-half of the operating budget. Research is conducted by staff members from the school system and the university. Currently, over twenty projects are in process. The Center offices are located within two blocks of the administrative offices of the Grand Rapids Public Schools.

The structure and operation of the Center is based on several principles.

The first is that a close relationship between university researchers and school practitioners is necessary. The second is that the collaboration of university and school system personnel can best occur in a setting which makes it possible to draw upon the total spectrum of human resources of both institutions. A



third principle upon which the Center is grounded is that research contacts should be sustained and cohesive, thus facilitating cumulative understanding through longitudinal research. Finally, the most essential principle behind the Center for Educational Studies is that the same research findings can contribute to a disciplinary body of knowledge and to the solution of educational problems confronting teachers, students, and administrators.

As an inter-disciplinary and inter-institutional entity, the goal of the Center is to produce research which is useful for the understanding of education and to the achievement of the educational missions of both parent institutions. The Center stimulates research systematically in selected areas of emphasis as well as providing support for other research projects initiated by staff members from the school system and university.

The Center has contributed in a number of ways to the educational missions of universities and school systems. It provides a model for collaboration on a one-to-one basis between a university and a school system. It has led to an appreciation of the contribution research can make to improving school curriculum and teacher training programs in the sponsoring institutions. There is also an increased recognition of the importance of the substantive contributions to research which can be made by the school system personnel. Finally, the Center has contributed by specific changes which have resulted from studies which have been conducted during the past five years.

CASE STUDY OF THE

CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.
EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Origins: Why Was the Center Begun?

The first steps which led to the formation of the Grand Rapids Public Schools - Western Michigan University Center for Educational Studies were taken in 1965. At that time, three faculty members from Western Michigan University were working with two administrators from the Grand Rapids Public Schools on evaluations of state supported projects. Two of the Western Michigan University faculty were members of the Department of Sociology and one was a faculty member of the Department of Teacher Education. The Grand Rapids Schools personnel were from the Office of Testing and Evaluation and the Inner City Schools Office. . The way that these five individuals functioned together was typical of university consultants working with school system personnel. As these evaluations moved along however, it became apparent that many of the findings had implications for teacher training at Western, as well as implications for basic knowledge in education. One of the evaluations, for example, concerned the use of teacher The findings of the study revealed some specific problems in the teacher teacher aide relationship which were, in part, a function of the conventional training provided by the university. Thus, as the evaluations developed, the university and school system members discussed the inadequacies in the usual relationship between teacher training institutions and school systems and the advantages of collaboration. As a result of these discussions, several guiding principles were adopted.

The first principle was that a close relationship between university researchers and school practitioners is necessary. The public school teachers and administrators have perspectives which enable recognition of the crucial questions.

Day-to-day participation in the activities of the school system provides insights and an understanding of the situation necessary for good field research. The university professor has the theoretical and technical expertise in research.



The professor interested in the problems of education and public school teachers or administrators seek complimentary goals in the deepening of understanding of the process of teaching and learning. The perspectives and competencies are complementary. To work together as colleagues seems natural and logical.

The second principle is that the collaboration of university and school system personnel can best occur in a setting which makes it possible to draw upon the total spectrum of human resources of both institutions. The organization should avoid prior structural relationships which constrain collaboration among disciplines or between university and school system personnel. It should provide a structure for the joining of efforts in an organization removed from, yet part of the two cooperating systems.

Another principle was that the research contacts should be sustained and cohesive. Most educational problems do not yield to "one-shot" research. A mechanism is necessary which coordinates otherwise fragmented researches so that there is an accumulation of knowledge which is greater than the sum of the parts. In addition it is necessary to facilitate longitudinal research which, given the nature of the university and school system, is difficult to sustain. A coordinated program of cumulative research is not frequent because of the mobility of researchers and changing research interests. Research coordination requires a permanent enduring setting with continuity of purpose.

Perhaps the most essential principle was that the same research findings can contribute to a disciplinary body of knowledge and to the solution of "real" problems of teachers and administrators. Many issues embodied in the problems faced by the teacher are issues which have theoretical relevance. To segregate the development of theory in the university and the confrontation of specific



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educational problems in the school system is to perpetuate the mischievous fallacy of problem-solving on the basis of <u>ad hoc</u> response. Ultimately all "practical" knowledge gained extends understanding; all "abstract" knowledge forwards practice. The collaboration of university and school system personnel in research can increase the likelihood of multiple use of research products to the benefit of both systems.

During the preliminary discussions, it was realized that cooperation between universities and school systems poses many organizational and ideological
problems. However, there was agreement on the principles discussed above. Moreover, the characteristics and needs of both institutions, with their history of
cooperation, seemed to afford a unique opportunity for the development of a
structure for ongoing collaboration in educational research.

Grand Rapids is the second largest city in the State of Michigan and the major urban center of the western section of the state. Its public school system has an enrollment of 34,400 children in one junior college, in thirteen secondary, fifty-four elementary and six special schools. It employs one thousand six hundred fifty-four teachers.

The public school system has a history of cooperation with universities and colleges in the state. It maintains numerous city, federal and state funded programs for the busing of inner city students, middle school development, ungraded elementary education, preschool programs, etc. The Grand Rapids Public School System is a large, heterogeneous school system affected by the complications and problems found in urban areas throughout the country. Research findings through the Center should not only be generalizable because of the university supplied theoretical base for the research, but also because of the representativeness of the city and its school system.



Western Michigan University, the major institution of higher learning in the western section of Michigan, has a student enrollment of 22,000. Historically a teachers college, it has become a multi-versity while retaining its emphasis by being the second largest producer of teachers in the nation.

The University maintains graduate programs in education and all behavioral sciences. Doctoral programs have been developed in Educational Leadership, Science Education, Sociology, Chemistry, and Mathematics. Central computer facilities, and numerous research organizations facilitate research activities within the University.

The five persons involved in the preliminary planning thus began to discuss the possibility of some sort of organization which would result from joining the forces of the two institutions. Discussions with appropriate administrators (Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents of Schools, President of the University, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dean of the College of Education, Department Head of Sociology, and Director of the Center for Sociological Research) were initiated and a multi-disciplinary, inter-institutional planning group was appointed. This planning group consisted of faculty members and administrators from the university and the school system and was charged with the task of exploring the desirability and structure of an organization for research. During the planning, many issues were raised. Should the organization be incorporated? How many administrators would be required? What kind of organizational structure would be desirable? How formalized should the arragements be? In what College should the organization be placed in the University and in what area within the School System should it be placed? How much space would be required? How much would it cost?



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Seriously considered in the original discussions between Western Michigan University and the Grand Rapids Public School System was the establishment of a jointly sponsored incorporated organization for research. The promise of such an organization seemed tarnished by the possibility of yet another separate organization from which both university and school system could become isolated.

The planning group was successful in producing a proposal for an organization which was accepted by the administration of both institutions, Western Michigan University Board of Trustees, and the Grand Rapids Public Schools Board of Education. In September, 1968, the Grand Rapids Public Schools - Western Michigan University Center for Educational Studies began operations. The Center is an organization which is a permanent part of both institutions who share equally in the cost, use, and of its governance. The Center for Educational Studies joins the resources of the Grand Rapids Public Schools and Western Michigan University in order to produce knowledge that will lead to an improvement of the training and practice of educational personnel.

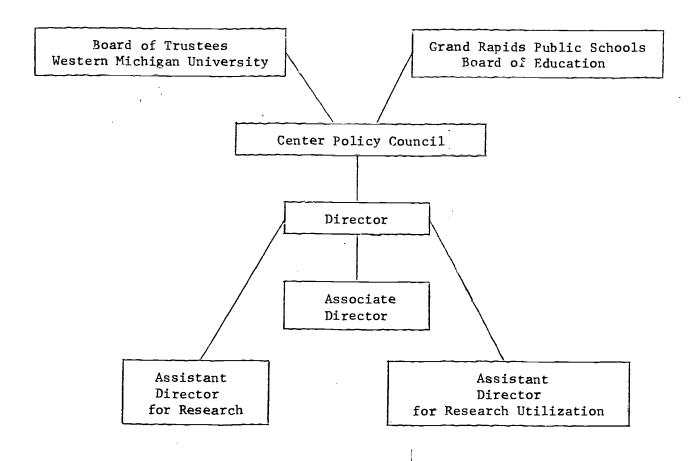
Organization: How Is the Center Run?

The organizational plan for the Center is presented in Figure 1 (see page 6). The Center is governed by a Policy Council which is responsible to the President of the University and the Superintendent of Schools. The Council is composed of four persons from Western Michigan University and four persons from Grand Rapids Public Schools. The Western Michigan University personnel are: the Vice President for Institutional Services, who serves as the President's representative; the Dean of the Division of Continuing Education; a Professor of Sociology; and the Associate Dean of the College of Education. The four Grand Rapids personnel who serve on the Council are: the Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Services and Compensatory Education, who serves as the Superintendent's representative; the Deputy Superintendent; the Assistant Superintendent



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Figure 1
Current Organization of the Center



for Instruction; and an Assistant Director of Elementary Education. The Director and Associate Director serve, ex-officio, on the Council. The Center Policy Council controls the policy and financial aspects of the Center, which receives one-half of its total budget from each of the two institutions. The Center administration prepares a proposed budget which is examined by the Council and recommended to the participatory institutions by the Council representatives of the President and Superintendent.

The parity with regard to fiscal considerations reflects an important principle of Center operation. Both institutions share in the cost, governance, use and results of the Center. The Center does not constitute an attempt on the part of one institution to help the other. Neither the Superintendent nor the President can afford to be altruistic with scarce resources. It is essential that the investigations conducted through the Center deal with matters urgent to both institutions. Funding for the Center comes from the general fund of both institutions. Figure 2 (see page 8) is the budget for the current year.

Every three years the positions of Director and Associate Director are rotated between the two institutions. Currently, Western holds the Directorship and Grand Rapids the Associate Directorship. The institution which does not hold the Directorship holds the position of Chairman of the Center Policy Council One Assistant Director is appointed from Grand Rapids and one from Western. All administrators are based in one of the two institutions and hold a half-time position in the Center—The current Director is a Professor of Teacher Education at Western Michigan University, the Associate Director is Director of Research and Data Analysis of the Grand Rapids Public Schools, the Assistant Director of Research is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Western Michigan University, and the Assistant Director for Research Utilization is Supervisor of Research and Data Analysis of the Grand Rapids Public Schools.



GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS - WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

BUDGET 1972 - 1973

Anticipated Expenditures:

Anticipated Receipts:

| • | | 12,680.80 3,758,13 |
|--|--|---|
| S GR) | r um Development \$ 1,700.00 1,500.00 63.49 13.98 50.00 38.33 1,500.00 | 105.00 |
| Secretary (Grand Rapids) Secretary, Indirect Costs (GR) Secretary (% time, Western) Secretary, Indirect Costs (WMU) Graduate Associate Under-Graduate Assistant Travel Conferences Sumplies and Publications | IBM Rental Telephone Equipment Service and Repair Center Rental Center Evaluation Research Support and Program Development COP Research Sp. Ed. Perf. Contr 1,500.00 Year I Non-Verbal Tasks 63.49 CNS Dysfunction Art Study Art Study Elementary Counseling 38.33 Sp. Ed. Perf. Contr 1,500.00 Year II Social Learning 710.00 | Sociological Resources Research Development Contingency |
| \$20,509.50 20,509.50 300.00 1,500.00 11,803.21 \$54,916.21 | \$98,658.21 | |
| Grand Rapids Public Schools Western Michigan University Publications Special Ed. Perf. Contr Year II USOE (Coop. Research Grant) Balance from 1971-72 | Professional Personnel Salaries | |

1 Balance of grant from 1971-72.

Professional Personnel Salaries 2 \$3,827.80 allocated for previously approved expenditures.

43,742.00

\$54,916.21

\$98,658.21

10/16/72

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The main functions of the Assistant Director for Research are to stimulate research projects consistent with the research function of the Center; to process all research proposals for action by the Center staff; to work with fiscal officer (Associate Director) of the Center in matters regarding management of research funds, preparation of fiscal reports, etc.; to monitor research conducted through the Center; to preside over staff meetings concerning research projects; and to maintain records concerning research projects of the Center. The most important function, perhaps, is his role as a kind of research ombuds—man, helping researchers from both systems deal with the social, political and moethodological problems involved in inter-institutional, multi-disciplinary field research.

The Assistant Director for Research Utilization is responsible for facilitating communication of research projects to appropriate audiences, the preparation and distribution of Center publications, and the acquisition and maintenance of the Center library. He also serves as historian of Center activities and maintains records of Center research.

The Director and Associate Director are responsible for the general administration of the Center. The Associate Director is the Center's fiscal officer.

The Center for Educational Studies is situated in the hub of educational activities in western Michigan. It is located 45 miles from the campus of Western Michigan University. The Center is within two blocks of the administration offices of the Grand Rapids Public Schools. It is in the same building as instructional facilities of the Grand Rapids Junior College and the extension offices of Western Michigan University, Michigan State University, the University of Michigan and Central Michigan University.



Research Development: How Does the Center Stimulate Research?

Initially, research was stimulated wherever possible. Some concern for implimentarity and cumulativeness of research guided the activity of research development, but this was generally sporadic and unsystematic. The Center was effective using this mode of research development. A considerable number of investigations were stimulated which would not have taken place if the Center did not exist. These studies grew from the needs of both systems and have, in many cases, had application in the systems. Through this mode of operation, the Center also was successful in establishing an atmosphere wherein collaboration between people in the university and school system is perceived as desirable. In 1972, after four years of Center existence, there is a greater understanding in the school system of the necessity, utility, and legitimacy of research. In the University, there is a greater awareness of the benefits of collaboration with the school system.

At present, the Center is attempting to concentrate efforts. After considerable discussion, three research emphases have been selected. The deliberate stimulation of specified emphases would be a realization of one of the basic reasons for the creation of the Center. The research emphases are intended to provide a means by which the Center for Educational Studies will be an active agent in the development of coordinated studies leading to cumulative knowledge in the areas of emphasis. The Center will stimulate and facilitate research deliberately, rather than facilitating only that which arises spontaneously from the school system and university. The development of research emphases will permit the effective investment of the limited resources of the School System, University, and Center. Definition of research emphases makes possible the accumulation, cross-fertilization, and organization of research efforts and findings to an extent far greater than a random compilation of disparate

researches. The areas which have been tentatively selected are:

1. Research On Teaching As A Career

This emphasis would focus on studies pertaining to the teacher as professional and employee. Studies could include research on mobility patterns, patterns of advancement, career plans and satisfaction, the relationship among background characteristics and longevity, further education, or organizational involvement. Since twenty percent of Grand Rapids teachers were trained at Western Michigan University, opportunities for longitudinal studies are quite attractive.

2. Individualizing Instruction

Research within this emphasis would be concerned with the problems which must be solved in order to develop systems of individualized instruction. Studies of teacher and administrator behavior, as well as structure of beliefs and conception of role as it relates to individualization, are included. Comparisons of different delivery systems in terms of student output variables will be encouraged. Currently efforts are focused on the development of instruments to measure the magnitude and differing types of individualization within elementary school classrooms.

3. Research In the Use of Leisure and the Quality of Life

These studies will concern the imperatives for education which result from the increase of leisure time in our society and the growing concern for emotional as well as material well-being. Studies on the use of leisure time, the acquisition of life-long interests which result from schooling, the impact of fine arts education, and schools as resources for continuing education into adulthood are some of the topics included in this area of emphasis.



Conclusions: What Has Been the Impact of the Center?

1. The Center As a Model for Other Universities and School Systems

To the best of our knowledge no organization exists which is structured similar to the Center for Educational Studies. When the Center was planned, there were few guidelines in the establishment of policy and procedure. The closest model was that of the consortium which is in several ways dissimilar to what we sought to establish.

The purpose of the Center is to produce research of importance for the understanding of education and for the achievement of the educational mission of both parent institutions. To attain this goal calls for a structure encouraging maximum participation of personnel from both systems as well as significant rather than pro forma input at the policy level. It is by design, therefore, that the Center is not a consortium of many school systems and universities. Instead, the Center for Educational Studies institutionalizes a one-to-one relationship of a university and school system. Such an arrangement maximizes access by staff and allows for scrutiny and input at the policy level by the parent organizations. Therefore, it seemed appropriate to keep these efforts based within the institutions rather than providing a third autonomous base.

We do not believe that Centers such as the Center for Educational Studies are feasible or desirable in all situations. Indeed, in some situations, arrangements like consortiz maybe more appropriate. There are probably other situations wherein the Grand Rapids Public Schools - Western Michigan University Center for Educational Studies can provide a model. The Center has provided information to persons from other universities and school systems about the organization and operations.



2. The Center As a Means of Changing Attitudes

In the first section of this document, several of the attitudes which have thwarted university — school system relationships were identified. As a result of the Center, individuals in both systems have modified the attitudes about research and the desirability of working in concert. Teachers and administrators in the school system have come to see that research can play an important part in program development, not by exhortation but by experience. University researchers have recognized that their school system colleagues can make substantive as well as logistical contributions to the research.

Gradually over the five year history of the Center, increasing numbers of individuals from both institutions have sought Center assistance. Those individuals who have been able to see how research can lead to program improvement have been generally consistent clients of the Center.

3. Utilization of Specific Researches

Initially, the Center's dissemination activity was directed by a search for visibility as much as for changing behavior. The earliest dissemination efforts consisted of the production of conventional research reports and of the publication of succinct and attractive abstracts. It is doubtful if many people were powerfully moved by these publications. As a result of experience, publications of abstracts have slowed down considerably and a diversified set of dissemination techniques like small group presentations, staff reports, keypersonnel briefings, and conferences have been used.

Currently the dissemination activities for any study are guided by a dissemination plan developed as the study nears completion. This document is prepared by the Assistant Director for Research Utilization and describes the various audiences which might benefit from the results of the investigation and the appropriate techniques to be employed. No single technique will serve all



audiences. It is a conviction of the Center staff that the nature of the audience is the prime consideration in determining the method of dissemination. It is gratifying to note and to be able to chronicle events and changes it is because red as a result of research activities and findings carried on by the Center for Educational Studies.

Examples of dissemination activities include the following:

1. <u>Individualization of Instruction</u>: <u>What Teachers Believe</u>. Researchers: Bosco (WMU), Laramy (GRPS).

An abstract of this study was published. Dr. Bosco and Miss Laramy made presentations to faculty groups throughout the city. Dr. Bosco published an article based on the study in the <u>Elementary School</u>

<u>Journal</u> (December, 1971). Instruments developed for this investigation are currently being refined and will be used in an analysis of a number of commercially developed techniques for individualizing instruction.

2. Research in Art Education: The Development of Perception in Art Production of Kindergarten Students. Researchers: Anway (GRPS), MacDonald (GRPS), Robin (WMU).

This study led to a restructuring of the kindergarten art program in Grand Rapids. An abstract of the completed report to the USOE was prepared. A presentation to the art consultants was held for the Grand Rapids Public Schools. An invitational conference for directors of art education in cities in Michigan and university art faculty was hosted by the Center. An article describing the research was requested by the Art Teacher and will be published in November, 1972. Dissemination to the community was provided by a



research, the Corin in the grand Rapids Press. As a result of earnessearch, the Corin in the gen requested by art education associations at both the state and national levels to assist in two art education research projects.

3. Social Service Delivery in the Grand Rapids Public Schools. Resembers:
Burian (WMU), Wheeler (GRPS).

This study accomplished two objectives. It provided needed information to the Grand Rapids Schools' Social Work Department concerning the organization and role performance of the Department. It also provided a research training experience for students at Western Michigan University who participated in the study.

4. Middle Cities Education Association Study: A Review of Section 3

Compensatory Education Programs. Researchers: Bosco (WMU), Robium

(WMU), Williams (GRPS), Jones (WMU).

The Middle Cities Education Association contracted with the Center to review the compensatory education programs in Michigan. This study along with a critique of the State Department of Education research on Compensatory Education by Bosco and Robin represents a reparture from the usual role of the Center.

The report had wide distribution among legislators and legislatiwe agents for several larger Michigan school districts. The findings of the study had considerable impact on modifying the funding of Chapter 3 of the State Aid Act.

5. The Role of Physical Education, Music and Art Consultants in the Grand Rapids Schools. Researchers: Brown (GRPS), Smidchens (WMU).

The purpose of the study was to determine the extent of agreement between regular classroom teachers and special teachers in art,



instruction in these areas. The results of this study led to the development of a series of recommendations which were adopted by the Instructional Council of the Grand Rapids Public Schools.

Performance Contracting. Researchers: Jones (WMU), DeBlaey (Calvin),
 Holstege (Calvin).

Center research on performance contracting prompted an invitational conference in the Spring of 1972. The principal purpose of the conference was to review Center research and stimulate further interest in research on performance contracting.

7. Ritalin for School Children: The Teachers' Perspective. Researchers:
Bosco (WMU), Robin (WMU).

The major dissemination activity for this study was a discussion with the pediatricians of Butterworth Hospital and Blodgett Hospital in Grand Rapids. The major implication of this study is the need for clarification of the nature of teacher involvement in Ritalin treatment regimens. A meeting of physicians and school personnel is being planned in order to develop guidelines for the relationship between physicians and teachers. In addition, other research which is underway is being coordinated with Departments of Teacher Education and Directed Teaching. Upon completion, these additional studies will be used to formulate curriculum materials and objectives for pre-service and in-service teacher education. The Center is sponsoring a symposium at the 1973 meetings of the American Educational Research Association in order to bring the findings on this work to the profession at large.



8. Sex Education. Researchers: Smith (WMU), Holmes (GRPS).

A series of three studies on sex education examining the attitudes of parents, students and teachers is currently nearing completion.

As an example of the "dissemination plan sheet" referred to previously, the dissemination plan for the sex education studies is reproduced on the next page to illustrate this technique.



DISSEMINATION PLAN SHEET

To:

Dr. Keely Dr. Bosco

Mr. Freeman

From:

Gordon Williams

Subject: Smith-Holmes Sex Education Study - Phase II

Date:

October 11, 1972

I see the first task on the dissemination agenda as a handout to the following central administration personnel:

- 1. Superintendent of Schools
- 2. Deputy Superintendent and all Assistant Superintendents
- 3. Directors and Assistant Directors of Elementary and Secondary Schools
- 4. Humanities Department personnel

Since the report is very lengthy, a cover memo which identified major findings and recommendations with page reference to reports might be useful. This should be followed by a request to appear on the Superintendent's Cabinet agenda for a brief presentation by Dr. Smith. He should point out that the parent and student results will follow soon.

(This process might even be timed so Herb could deliver the parent and student results to the Cabinet.)

At some point convenient and agreeable to the administration and the researchers, it would be useful to go to the Instructional Council and ultimately to the Education Committee of the Board of Education. However, I feel the total package should go to the Council and the Education Committee -- not a piecemeal presentation.

A meeting with faculty members from WMU in the Teacher Education and Home Economics Department would be useful. It would be important to deal with the recommendation contained on page 43 (paragraphs 3, 4 and 5).

Lastly, it should seem that the study should be published. We should provide assistance to Herb in editing the report for publication.

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